



The Correctional Oasis

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Contents:

Administrators' Immediate Action Steps Following a Critical Incident
The Process of Dialogue—2
IACTP Award for CF2F
CF2F T4T 2016 & 2017 Dates
Firm, Fair and Consistent
"Passing It Along" Volume 1
Police Peer Police-Level I & II
Miscellaneous DWCO News
"Staying Well" 2nd Edition
On Professional Boundaries
New DWCO Offerings
Quote of the Month
Many Thanks

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Part 5: What Is Psychological Trauma? Administrators' Immediate Action Steps Following a Critical Incident

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This was first published in the August 2015 issue of the Correctional Oasis. It is a reply to the query below submitted by a correctional administrator.

Q: I wanted to check in with you to ask if you have any ideas on where I can find some basic beginning steps on how administrators can act the first moments after a critical incident. Not about the debriefing, not the referrals to EAP. Rather what steps should be taken in the first 1-30 minutes of an event? After talking with someone who was recently assaulted by a client, it really hit me that so many

administrators just don't know what to do. So they avoid the situation – they freeze rather than act. I don't think this is done on purpose; it's like a reflex, automatic. I feel if we can begin sharing ideas with all department heads on how to even respond to the incident just after it occurred (for example, don't have them continue to see more clients on that day!! Duh! But so many do to make sure the job is getting done), we can begin to help show the importance of administration being involved in the addressing of the problems.

A: Thank you for your commitment as an administrator to keep moving the corrections profession forward by looking for effective ways to respond to potentially traumatized staff. Appropriate supportive responses can reduce the toxic effects of occupational hazards in corrections work, such as a staff assault.

Please note that my reply here only addresses ways to respond to the assaulted employee, not the need to lock down units, arrest clients, take offenders to segregation, etc.

In a nutshell, the focus immediately after the incident needs to be on **ensuring staff safety, tending to staff's urgent needs, and beginning the process of staff re-stabilization.**

The first step is a medical examination to assess the employee's condition, and to provide them with immediate medical care as needed. This is to be followed by access to higher-level emergency medical treatment as their condition requires, which may include transportation to a hospital by ambulance. In that case, administrators should visit the staff member at the hospital as soon as their condition allows, to offer them emotional and moral support.

After a medical checkup, and if no further medical care is recommended or is deemed to be warranted, the next step consists of the removal of the assaulted employee from the area of the incident. This is done in order to secure their physical safety, to reduce the likelihood of their exposure to possible ongoing threat, and to reduce the risk of them being re-victimized. That may mean getting them away from all offenders/clients, and also from trauma reminders (such as the location, certain items, or individuals.) There will be time to "get back on the horse" again later. Immediately after the event, the person needs to be able to begin calming down. Distancing themselves from threats and reminders—the perception of danger—is one way to do that.

Make it possible for the assaulted staff member to change clothes, and get cleaned up ASAP, if they have been soiled (such as by having body fluids thrown on them), or if their clothes have been torn. That will reduce their exposure to triggers (incident reminders), and help them feel like they are regaining their dignity. Indeed, some facilities stock care packages for staff that have been assaulted. These may include a pair of sweats, socks, a shirt, a towel, shampoo, toothpaste, and a token for a snack or beverage from a vending machine.

Have the assaulted staff member come to your office or go where they are and spend some time with them one-on-one. Offer them water to drink. Sit down with them in an area where you can close the door. If they come to your office, get around from behind your desk and sit in a chair next to them. Make eye contact. Express to them your caring about what they just went through, and your concern about their welfare. Absolutely do not drill them about details of the incident. Just listen empathically—that is, listen with a frame of mind of putting yourself in their shoes, trying to understand what the experience was like for them. If they froze, remind them that this is an involuntary and unpredictable brain-based reaction. Absolutely do not reprimand them for it.

Point out what they did well, and what went well overall.

The employee, pumped full of adrenaline, may be angry at this point, perhaps blaming themselves and/or others, including administrators. Give them space to vent. Listen, acknowledge, and validate the horror of what they've just experienced. Suggest that they most likely did the best they could at the time, under the circumstances, and that, like in every situation, lessons will be learned from this incident as well. Reassure them that their immediate reactions are understandable and to be expected/normal.

Absolutely refrain from arguing with the employee, or threatening them with discipline for being disrespectful. Do not tell them to correct their attitude or watch what they are saying if they want to keep their job. The general stance of administrators needs to be supportive—not judgmental, critical, angry or blaming. At this point self-control needs to be exercised by administrators if their own buttons are getting pushed by the assaulted staff's angry reactions.

I personally know of one such a situation that was handled in an exemplary fashion. The assaulted CO went “off” on his warden who met with him after the medical check. The latter, having come up through the ranks, and having experienced being assaulted himself, remained calm and quiet during the employee's tirade. When the CO finally ran out of words, the warden gently expressed to him his understanding of the CO's state of mind, and verbalized to him his sincere compassion for what he'd just been through. In turn, the CO took it all in, waited for a few moments, and then apologized for coming unhinged.

The next step of “being there” for the assaulted employee is tapping into their support network by having their friends at the facility be relieved of their duties so they can come to express their support to the staff member. In some cases, staff may not be comfortable talking extensively to an administrator, but they will talk to a friend. If you have trained peer supporters, call on them to come by as well and talk to the employee.

Ask the assaulted staff member if they want to make a phone call to family members and/or significant others in their community, and make it possible for them to do so privately.

If the assaulted staff member wants to make a round of the office or unit to show the clients/offenders that they “are keeping it together”—to walk with their head up in spite of the assault—honor them by accompanying them in doing so.

Additionally, as part of the support you offer, have the assaulted staff member be checked confidentially by a mental health provider at the facility, or allow them access to a room where they can shut the door and call your EAP hotline. These professionals can check for safety concerns, assess the employee's current functioning level and frame of mind, remind the staff member that acute reactions after an incident are normal, and tell them what signs might indicate that additional care/treatment is needed. They can give/email/fax them handouts with relaxation exercises and other coping strategies, and remind them to avoid using substances to cope, as these can destabilize their mood further.

Relieve the assaulted staff member of their duties for that day. Ask them if they'd like to take a day off of work. If they decline that, allow them to spend time as needed with peer supporters and/or mental health providers. If they insist on working, assign them to an area where they are likely to have minimal client/offender contact. When they come back to work, do another round of the unit/office with them, to visibly express your support of them.

If they are asked to write up their incident report immediately after it happens, keep in mind that the

reported order of events may be jumbled or unclear. Therefore, this initial report should be regarded as part 1 or incomplete, with the understanding that material may be added a few days later. This may be controversial to some, primarily for legal reasons, yet we are dealing with realities of the neurobiology of human memory following exposure to a traumatic event. The brain is not a video camera.

When it is time for the assaulted staff member to leave the office/ facility, arrange for someone to drive them home, and for another employee to drive their vehicle to their house.

And remember, it may not only be the assaulted staff member who needs your immediate attention. Those who witnessed the incident and those who responded are also likely to require your expressions of caring, consideration, validation, and support.

Note: Dr. Susan Jones was consulted on this piece, and she offered several comments and suggestions which helped shape this article.

The Process of Dialogue—Part 2

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As we continue our exploration of the communication practice known as dialogue, we want to present two metaphors: the Tug of War and the Container. These two practical illustrations are symbolic of two of the ways human communication is conducted. The former is competitive and oppositional, the latter is cooperative and shared.

The competitive Tug of War communication practice is so well known it doesn't require much explanation. You and a colleague (or family member or neighbor) have differing points of view or different solutions to a problem, and you both dig in and "pull" as hard as you can so as to bring the other person to your way of thinking. We do this by forcefully and clearly advocating for our position or point of view. We state our opinion, we summon examples that support our ideas, we plan for rebuttals and cross-examination. We summarize, rephrase, even repeat ourselves and object to any other possible solution or point of view. And we do this with energy, passion and commitment.

Of course, the other colleague (or family member or neighbor) is doing exactly the same thing, so that the harder you both "pull" (advocate and object) the farther away you get from each other, until one side dominates by being louder or more impatient or more emotional or wearing the other out, or is victorious in some other way. And sometimes the rope breaks and both parties just walk away in opposite directions. Each claiming victory of course! Or as Dr. David Bohm says in the very slim text "On Dialogue", "[t]he defense of opinions separates people." (p. 28.)

This practice is so common that some people may even assert that it is hard-wired into our human DNA. Whether that is true or whether it is just socially conditioned – taught and learned – over and over again, we'll leave for someone else to decide. What does seem to be true is that it happens so frequently, without direct aim or planning, that any other communication strategy has to be applied consciously and intentionally. Which leads us to the Container.

When you find yourself, yet again, disagreeing with someone about a solution to a long-standing problem, before you start talking, before you start emotionally defending the position you know to be correct, imagine that a large open container is sitting in the room between you. This container starts out

completely empty, so imagine further that everything the other party says goes into that container for you to examine. As he or she talks, their ideas go into the container. You can stand back and look into the container, take individual pieces out, stir them around with each other, just be more objective about the other person's ideas rather than automatically fight against them as in a tug of war.

Then imagine that the same is true for everything you say as well. Your ideas go into the container. And they no longer belong to you personally. For the moment – temporarily – they are just common thoughts that both parties can consider. You haven't necessarily given up your strong beliefs. If you need to at any time you can take them out again and go on about your business. But for the duration of this particular dialogue you have simply decided that the verbal expression of these strong beliefs of yours are just so much data that both parties can analyze and process. So that as the conversation goes along, you both become objective observers of this mixed collection of thoughts, feelings, opinions, plans and desires.

Neither of you owns any of the ideas nearly as much as both parties own all of the ideas equally. The container holds all of these mutually created thoughts, feelings, opinions, plans and desires, and both of you are allowed to examine them. You both ask questions about the ideas in the container. Not in the form of an interrogation, where "I'm right and you're wrong" is the outcome, but more in the form of an objective exploration in which every answer becomes more data for the container to hold. "Here is my view and here is how I have arrived at it. How does it sound to you? What makes sense to you and what doesn't? Do you see any ways I can improve it?" (Senge et al, p. 253)

One of the surprising things that happens with this kind of strategy is that new solutions begin to appear. In the tug of war, there are only two possible solutions – yours and mine, and may the best "tugger" win. While it's true that both parties could slack their ropes slightly and meet in the middle with a compromise – frequently a good thing, of course – it also means that both parties are still stuck with the original, polarized options. The essential win-lose construction remains. The container on the other hand allows for new combinations of ideas and new solutions. The container contributes to creativity and progress without even trying to do so. It will just naturally happen as two people objectively process their mutual ideas. And at the same time, the possibility of win-win increases substantially.

This can work for a group discussion just as easily as it can for a one-on-one debate. Again quoting Bohm, "[t]he collective thought is more powerful than the individual thought." (p. 7) And the spirit of dialogue and its successful application in real life starts with this belief: "the collective thought is more powerful than the individual thought." If the circumstances don't allow for such an approach – if there is an emergency or other severe time constraints for example, or if the issue is somewhat trivial, or if modifications can be made "on the fly" without damaging the original plan – the container may be unwieldy or unnecessary. But in most other cases, the container can hold as many thoughts and ideas as there are people willing to participate in the dialogue. Acknowledging the value of collective thought – the durability, the respect, the creativity, and the community – is the true essence of dialogue.

Finally, one may think that it takes something like immense patience and serenity to accomplish a container dialogue successfully. And while those attributes are always welcome in any mutual problem-solving process, our experience is that the primary trait that contributes to effective dialogue is more likely to be simple, yet genuine curiosity – curiosity that comes from unlocking one's ownership of an idea to allow it to be examined objectively. What becomes tricky in the actual doing of things is to maintain that genuine curiosity when one's assumptions or strongly held beliefs are challenged. And this is where emotional courage comes in, because one element of curiosity is courage. Ask any explorer.

Wondering out loud, especially in a public setting, whether or not one's ideas are truly the correct ones for the decision at hand includes the possibility that one might have to change one's mind. But as has been said many times, it's not so much change people dislike, it's being forced to change.

So the next time you're in a win-lose tug of war conversation, where fighting against being changed seems to be an inevitable component, put down your end of the rope before it breaks and neutrally throw your ideas into a win-win container in the middle of the room.

Let the other person state their position before you do yours. Let the others express their curiosity by asking you questions just like you are asking them. Don't interrogate, advocate or object, just explore. Besides the collective and very likely more durable decision, "you will almost always be rewarded with better relationships and a reputation for integrity." (Senge et al, p. 255)

Suggested Reading

Bohm, David. (1996). *On Dialogue*. New York, New York: Routledge Classics

Senge, P., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R., Smith, B. (1994). *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*. New York, New York. Doubleday.

IACTP Selects CF2F for its 2016 Commercial Program Award of Excellence

It is with deep thankfulness and humility that we announce that Desert Waters' signature program "From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment™" was selected by the *International Association of Correctional Training Personnel (IACTP)* for its 2016 Commercial Program award of excellence. The award will be given at IACTP's annual conference in St. Louis, MO, in October 2016.

Upcoming Instructor Training in Colorado "From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment™" (CF2F) Course

Location: The Abbey, Cañon City, CO*

2016: · September 27–30 (Full)

2017: · March 21–24; September 26–29

SIX Customized Versions Available: For (1) correctional institution staff (prisons and jails), (2) probation and/or parole office staff, (3) juvenile justice facility staff, (4) juvenile justice community corrections staff, (5) *New!* staff working with sex offenders in any capacity and setting, and (6) *Recently redesigned!* newly recruited/hired staff.

*1. We also offer the 4-day CF2F Instructor Training at your agency location.

2. If you prefer to not train your own CF2F instructors, we provide the 1-day course directly to your staff.

For more information, contact us.

Firm, Fair and Consistent—It's Not A Cliché

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In my travels in retirement conducting jail staff training, I frequently ask jail officers: "What has worked for you when managing inmates both safely and professionally?"

One answer I always hear is a correctional officer (CO) should always be "firm, fair and consistent." This is not a cliché. This simple phrase holds great meaning for us who enter our nation's correctional facilities every workday, every year, to manage and keep in custody the inmate population. We deal with many types and personalities and no day is like another. It is unfortunate that many citizens and the media do not know what we do or what we experience. But, thanks to organizations such as the American Correctional Association, the American Jail Association and the excellent International Association of Correctional Training Personnel, corrections is being steadily recognized and appreciated.

Let's take a look at the phrase and review what it really means. I will have some input, in conjunction with an excellent book by retired New York City Corrections Officer Larone Koonce. His book ***Correction Officer's Guide to Understanding Inmates: The 44 Keys to Power, Control and Respect*** is an excellent resource for COs and trainers. We will look at the chapter titled *Key 2: Be Firm, Fair and Consistent* and is subtitled: *This will help to gain the respect of the inmates.*

Firm: Koonce says, and I agree, that firmness means that a CO should stand his or her ground. The main goal of a CO is to enforce corrections rules, regulations, criminal statutes and the policies and procedures of the facility. COs are not there to be popular among the inmates or to be their "pal." A CO will be pressured by inmates every shift to bend the rules or ignore policy and procedures. If COs think that it is all right to do this and delude themselves by thinking that inmates "are not all that bad," the pressure will increase. COs must say no—firmly. Inmates may not like it at first, but slowly the CO who says No and adheres to procedures will earn inmates' respect and be viewed as "squared away." And the CO who is firm will have the support of his or her squad, supervisors and the high up "brass"—the wardens, superintendents and sheriffs. The inmates will come to realize this. Respect may come reluctantly from the inmates, but reluctant respect is better than none at all.

Fair: A professional CO applies the rules fairly to every inmate, regardless of crime, behavior, sentence, race, gender, physical size or education. One inmate should not be favored over another. If favoritism occurs, resentment among the inmates grows. They see some having a good ride from the CO, while they have to go by the rules. Not only does resentment grow, but inmates may argue and resent each other because some feel that they are not being treated fairly. Also, favoritism, Koonce states, forms a two-tier system where the CO is sharing power with the inmates. Power and authority should remain solely with the CO.

I know from experience that not playing favorites—even in a small way—can make the job easier. For example, early in my career I was working the day shift on the maximum security floor at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center. Lunch for the inmates was a bowl of soup and a sandwich. After the trustees passed out lunches to the cellblocks, I settled down at my desk to eat mine—the same fare as the inmates. (In the old days, sometimes you could not be relieved for a meal due to short staffing.) A trusty came to the main door of the floor and said that he had some extra sandwiches and asked me if I

would allow him to pass them out. I asked him if he had enough extras for the whole floor. He said that he did not. I sent him back to the kitchen—without passing out the extras. Why? I did not want any arguments or resentments from the inmates who would not have received another sandwich.

Consistent: Inmates appreciate an institutional routine that is established and reliable. The mail is passed out regularly, the televisions come on at a certain time, and programs are on schedule. Visiting and recreation go on without any difficulty. It helps to keep the place calm.

Inmates also appreciate COs who do not run “hot and cold.” They learn quickly if you behave the same on every shift, if you treat the inmates fairly in a steady, consistent manner. This shows that you can be depended upon to do your job responsibly and treat inmates as people. When you do that, they will feel comfortable around you. They know what to expect from you. Don’t be a CO who is sociable, polite and acts mature on Monday, and is grumpy, sarcastic and condescending towards inmates on Tuesday. We all like consistency when we deal with others. Inmates are no different.

Finally the phrase “firm, fair and consistent” is very similar to the Golden Rule: “Treat others as you would like to be treated.” We would like to be treated with fairness, and in the same way as others. We would like to be treated in a firm manner—per the rules, not being subjected to one set of rules over another. Finally, we would like to be treated the same way by people we encounter—not by people who are running hot and cold. Inmates will appreciate it too. It is not just a cliché. It’s professionalism: Firm, Fair and Consistent.

Reference:

Koonce, Larone. (2012). ***Correction Officer’s Guide to Understanding Inmates: The 44 Keys to Power, Control and Respect***. Atlanta: Koonce Publishing.

Lt. Cornelius has more than 30 years of experience in law enforcement and corrections.

Passing It Along: Wisdom from Corrections Staff, Vol.1

Caterina Spinaris, PhD, Editor

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Chapters:How It All Began, New Officer on the Block, Presence, Doing the Right Thing, I Stand Corrected, Being an Encourager, Swimming in the Cesspool, Two Paths to Correctional Fatigue, Path to Self-care, One Year Smoke Free!, Emergency Preparedness for the Heart, Cut or Culled from the Herd?, A Solid Partner, Down Time, “What’s Better about Me as a Person as a Result of Working in Corrections?”, Of What Qualities Are Effective Corrections Staff Comprised?, In Closing.

Police Peer Support—Level I and Level II

©Jack A. Digliani, PhD, EdD

Police peer support differs from counseling and psychotherapy. Peer support is a nonprofessional supportive interaction, whereas counseling and psychotherapy traditionally involve a professional relationship with a licensed clinician. Therefore, peer support is best conceptualized as a

nonprofessional interpersonal interaction wherein: (1) a person attempts to assist another person with a stressful circumstance, and (2) the person providing support shares some common background, experience, condition, or history with the person he or she is attempting to help.

There are two levels of peer support. Level I peer support consists of the support found in the everyday positive interactions of friends, co-workers, and others that have some peer status. Nearly everyone, at one time or another, has been the provider and the recipient of this type of peer support.

Level I peer support has a long history and can be thought of as “traditional” peer support. Level II peer support is similar to Level I, but Level II peer support includes several important components that are not present, or not necessarily present, in Level I. This makes Level II peer support interactions different from the Level I support that can come from “friends talking.”

Characteristics of Level II Peer Support:

1. Level II peer support is provided by members of an agency-recognized peer support team that functions within state statute and/or department policy and operational guidelines.
2. Level II peer support is provided by persons trained in peer support.
3. Level II peer support interactions are characterized by elements of functional relationships which encourage exploration, empowerment, and positive change.
4. Advice-giving is avoided in Level II peer support; independent decision-making is encouraged.
5. Level II peer support is guided by ethical and conceptual parameters. This makes it different than just “friends talking.”
6. Level II peer support has positive outcomes as its goal. This is not always the case in Level I peer support interactions.
7. Peer support team members are clinically advised or supervised by a licensed mental health professional. This provides a “ladder of escalation” if consultation or referral is needed. A structured ladder of escalation is not available in Level I interactions.
8. Level II peer support, while non-judgmental, includes a safety assessment; that is, it has an evaluative component. If a peer support team member assesses that the recipient of peer support is dealing with an issue that exceeds the parameters of peer support or if it is assessed that the recipient is or may be overly stressed, depressed, or suicidal, the peer support team member is trained to act upon the assessment. This is accomplished by providing information about available resources, making appropriate referrals, moving up the ladder of escalation, or initiating emergency intervention.

Peer support team members capable of providing Level II peer support may continue to provide Level I peer support. Level I peer support occurs when peer support team members are not acting in their peer support team member role. However, when peer support team members are not acting in their peer support team role, the confidentiality privileges afforded to peer support team members during peer support interactions do not apply.

Level II peer support, like Level I, may consist of a one-time contact or ongoing meetings. Some police officers and administrators are unclear about the role of a peer support team, especially considering that most modern-day police jurisdictions provide counseling services through health insurance plans and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). It is not surprising that some police administrators ask, “With employee insurance coverage and an EAP, why do we need a peer support team?” The answer is simple: **Peer support teams occupy a support niche that cannot be readily filled by either health plan counseling provisions or an EAP. This is because well-trained and highly functioning peer support teams provide support that is qualitatively different than that provided by health insurance therapists or EAP counselors.**

The difference? **The difference is the power of the peer.** The power of the peer is the factor that is a constant in the support provided by peer support team members. It is the factor that is not, and cannot, be present in any other support modality. Therefore, if an agency wants to do the best it can to support its officers, a peer support team is necessary. Peer support can be initiated early in an officer's career. It can be made available to recruit-officers during basic police academy training, as well as be incorporated into police officer field training programs.

Dr. Digliani is a licensed psychologist and former police officer. More information at www.jackdigliani.com.

Miscellaneous DWCO News

Dr. Spinaris was a member of the panel on “Corrections Officer Suicide” sponsored by Division 41 at the American Psychological Association’s Annual Convention in Denver, CO, on Aug. 5, 2016.

Dr. Spinaris presented the workshop, “Corrections Officer Suicide: Evidence-based Risk Factors and Protective Factors,” at the American Correctional Association’s Congress of Correction in Boston, MA, on Aug. 8, 2016.

Staying Well: Strategies for Corrections Staff, 2nd Ed.

By Caterina Spinaris, PhD

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Chapters: The Toll of the Job; Corrections Fatigue; Taking Your Life Back; Professional Boundaries; Families in Corrections; Psychological Trauma; Depression; Moral Injury; Substance Abuse; Corrections Staff Suicide; A Spiritual Solution; Moving Forward

On Professional Boundaries in Corrections

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Power Differential

- Understand your occupational responsibilities and context, that you are working with people—offenders, parolees or probationers—in a professional capacity, where your professional role gives you powers over them.
- Because of this power differential—the power conferred to you by your professional role—the responsibility for decision-making, and for defining and maintaining professional boundaries ultimately rests with you, the corrections professional.
- It is the staff’s responsibility to place a boundary around their own sexual energy.
- In their interactions with offenders, it is the staff’s responsibility to place a boundary around offenders’ sexual energy.
- If offenders sexualize interactions with staff or other offenders, this should be documented, and steps taken to stop inappropriate behaviors.

Protecting Yourself as a Professional

- Acknowledge to yourself feelings of attraction to an offender or client as soon as you experience them, and then take action to prevent any violation of professional boundaries.
- Such remedial action may include talking about your attraction ASAP to mental health providers, supervisors, chaplains, peer supporters, or trusted friends.
- Be clear about the “rules of engagement”—your agency’s ARs & P&Ps.
- Learn how to firmly and indisputably set limits with offenders who act seductively.
- Never think of or refer to an offender as “my inmate,” a “bad boy” or a “naughty girl.”
- Do not engage in friendly, playful, or affectionate behavior with offenders or clients.
- Do offer appropriate verbal support when warranted.
- Establish a reputation of having firm and appropriate professional boundaries.
- Align yourself with staff who are consistently ethical and security-conscious.
- Try to understand offenders’ thinking, needs, and mode of operation.
- Acknowledge your vulnerabilities, such as during a relationship breakup, and take steps to stay emotionally healthy and ethically sound, including by seeking professional help.
- Identify signs that you may be starting down a slippery slope.
- Try to understand your needs and motives.
- Develop and maintain appropriate and ethical ways to meet your self-esteem needs, your social needs, and your sexual needs.
- Regularly “inspect” your professional boundaries, and repair any breaches to them.
- Boundary repairs can be done, for example, by reviewing the effectiveness of your coping strategies, examining more efficient ways to meet your needs, rejecting rationalizations about lowering your professional walls with offenders or clients, and role playing setting limits and communicating assertively.
- Remind yourself and other staff of the staff-offender power differential.
- Be aware of potentially problematic interactions with offenders—grey areas.
- Set appropriate limits on yourself, including on your thoughts and fantasies.
- Be on the lookout for signs of complacency in yourself.
- Engage in honest self-assessment about your boundaries on a weekly basis.
- Get an accountability partner or group.
- No sharing of treats with offenders.
- Set appropriate limits on others by saying NO firmly and consistently.
- Educate offenders on appropriate limits physically and verbally.
- Do not make sexualized comments about offenders’ physical appearance.
- Do not inquire or make comments about offenders’ sexual history, orientation or preferences, unless this is part of your professional role.
- Take other staff’s warnings or cautions about your behavior very seriously and evaluate them with humility.
- Behave as if you are continuously being on camera or videotaped (and you may well be).
- Behave as if your mother or your supervisor/warden/director were standing next to you.
- Remind yourself of legal consequences to sexually inappropriate choices in your professional setting.
- Have a life outside of work!
- And remember: Any professional can be tempted to cross boundary lines. No one is immune!

- Desert Waters now offers a 5-day **Peer Supporter Training** course for Corrections Professionals. (The course can be offered as a 4-day training for certified CF2F Instructors). Contact us for details.
- The holiday season can be emotionally taxing and otherwise stressful, whether staff are working or whether they have the time off. Desert Waters will be offering a **Holiday Staff Support Webpage** that presents support materials, such as coping strategies and other resources for staff and their families. The webpage will be available from mid-November, 2016 to mid-February, 2017. This service was offered as a pilot last year and it was widely used by staff at the agencies that offered it. If your agency would like more information as to how to obtain this service for employees, please contact us. Subscribing agencies will be provided with a link and password to the page, and then disseminate that information to their employees.

MANY THANKS

Thank you for supporting the mission of Desert Waters!

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Business donors: Janice Graham & Company, P.C.

Organization donors: Association of Oregon Correctional Employees

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New Mass Email System

Last month we started emailing the *Correctional Oasis* using [GetResponse](#).

We email you a link to access the most current issue on our site (under Periodical), and an attachment of the issue TEXT ONLY.

If you cannot open links at your place of work, please consider subscribing with your personal email address.

Quote of the Month

“Wisdom is nothing more than healed pain.”

~ Robert Gary Lee

DWCO Disclaimer

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DWCO is not responsible for accuracy of statements made by authors. If you have a complaint about something you have read in the *Correctional Oasis*, please contact us.

DWCO Mission

To promote the occupational, personal and family well-being of the public safety workforce through the provision of support, resources and customized data-driven solutions.

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